ThunderStrike®

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INC

ThunderStrike

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IBM PC and Compatibles

Before Starting The Game

There are two 5.25" disks and one 3.5" disk. The master disk(s) are not "write protected," so if you run the game from the master disk(s) the high scores will be saved on your master disk(s). You may make a backup copy and run the game from the copy.

Refer to your computer operating manual for instructions on making a backup copy.

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

You can run ThunderStrike from the master disk(s) or your backup copy. If you run the game from your backup copy, you will be prompted to insert the master disk to use as a key disk to run the game. After the main menu screen comes up, reinsert your backup copy into the drive so that the high scores will be saved to this disk.

1. Insert the "Boot Disk" into the computer drive and from the MS-DOS prompt, select the correct drive specifier (A: B: C: etc.).
2. Type **ts** and press <RETURN>. The game will now begin to load.
3. Once the game has loaded, you will be confronted with a menu system to select the graphics mode and control method that you require. To quickly bypass these menus in the future, it is possible to type **ts** followed by a <SPACE> and then the letter(s) that you would normally select in each menu (example: **ts vm** This will run the game in the VGA graphics mode with the mouse for control.). Then hit <RETURN> to run the game.

   It is also possible to add the letter **r** to this command line which will alternate the up/down controls. This is useful for players more used to flight simulator type controls.
4. Refer to "Getting Started" on page 7 to start playing the game.

Hard Disk Installation

This game can be installed to your hard disk, but you will require your master boot disk to use as a key disk whenever you wish to play the game.

1. Insert the "Boot Disk" into the computer drive and from the MS-DOS prompt, select the correct drive specifier (A: B: C: etc.).
2. Type **install** and press <RETURN>.
3. Follow the instructions that come up on the screen.
4. Type **ts** and press <RETURN>. The game will now begin to load.
5. Refer to "Getting Started" on page 7 to start playing the game.

Amiga

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Insert the "Boot Disk" into the drive and switch the computer on. The game will now begin to load. Do not remove the disk from the drive while the game is playing.
2. You will be asked to type in a word from the manual. Then follow the instructions on the screen.
3. Refer to "Getting Started" on page 7 for more information on playing the game.

Atari ST

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

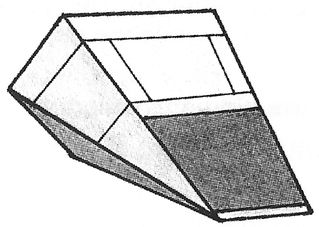
1. Insert the "Boot Disk" into the drive and switch the computer on. The game will now begin to load. Do not remove the disk from the drive while the game is playing.
2. Refer to "Getting Started" on page 7 for more information on playing the game.

Let The Games Begin

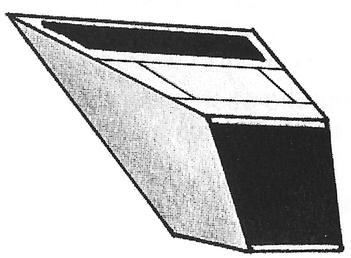
Welcome to the 2238 MegaCorp Industries annual 'Ground Defense Games' brought to you exclusively by the Century 23 television network!

I'm sure you're all familiar with the games by now but for those of you who have been in a different galaxy over the past century, I'll briefly tell you what these games are all about. Pilots from all over the galaxy are invited here by MegaCorp Industries to survive in lethal combat in a variety of hostile arenas especially prepared for the games.

Each pilot is allowed to select one ship from the five approved by the MegaCorp Referees Committee. The pilot must choose carefully because he will be required to fly this craft throughout the whole of the games. This year, the five crafts approved by the committee are:

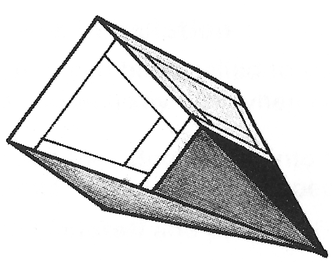


ThunderStrike 18 - The original and some would say the best ThunderStrike. A good all rounder with good speed, acceleration and handling.



StrikeHornet 22 - The StrikeHornet is a relative newcomer to the arena but is already establishing a following. It's top speed is slower than most, but excellent acceleration and good handling make Hornets worth a try.

StrikeHornet 24 - This newer model of the StrikeHornet class suffers the same speed problems of the earlier models. It is hampered further by slower acceleration, but no other strike craft in history comes close in maneuverability.



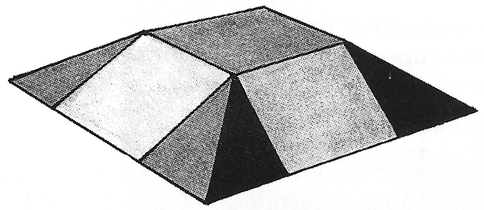
ThunderFly 10 - No strike craft can beat a ThunderFly for speed. This model handles well in a tight turn but suffers from slow acceleration.

ThunderFly 25 - This is the latest model in the ThunderFly class. It offers unbeatable speed and acceleration, but its handling leaves a lot to be desired as its slow turning speed can be a problem.

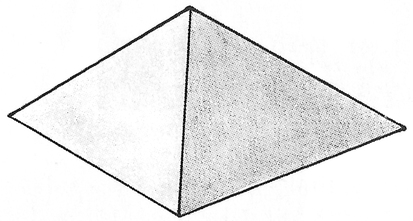
The committee also considered allowing the use of vintage craft this year, but this idea was abandoned after engineers failed to recondition a vintage Retaliator F29 craft. This was a very slow craft that was soon put out of service once the ThunderStrike class came in. It has very poor maneuverability, velocity and acceleration. It is even rumored that some people used to play computer simulations based on this old-fashioned 'museum piece' back in the late 20th Century, but this is generally regarded to be highly improbable — no one could be that boring!

Once the pilot has chosen his craft, a standard energy shield will be fitted to it and the drone generators and ground installations for the first round will be set up around the arena. The pilot must then enter the arena in his craft and wait at the center for the games to begin.

The object of the games is for the pilot to defend the ground installations and knock out all of the enemy drones and enemy drone generators in each round. The pilot will lose the game and his contract with MegaCorp will be terminated if he loses all of the ground installations on any single round.



Enemy Drone Generators



Ground Installations

At set intervals, referees will fire a variety of robotic drones into the arena from drone generators. These drones are armed with all the latest in military hardware and will try to destroy the pilot's craft and destroy his ground installations.

The pilot must destroy the drone generators to win the game. Referees cannot fire drones from destroyed generators, and it is in the pilot's interest to incapacitate the generators as soon as possible.

The craft's energy shield will be depleted every time it collides with a drone or is hit by enemy fire. If the craft's energy shield is exhausted, then any more hits sustained on the pilot's craft will destroy the craft and the pilot with it — just one of the many hazards that pilots come to expect from the games.

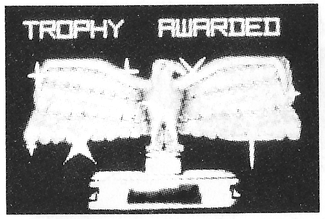
Sometimes, when a pilot destroys a drone, a pick-up pod will appear. Pick-up pods contain military hardware to aid the pilot and if he picks a pod up, it will be installed into his craft to aid him. Many new items of military hardware will be available in the pods this year.

As well as defending the ground installations, the pilot must attain a good hit rate and play a good exciting game to keep the network TV ratings high.

If a pilot manages to destroy all of the generators, then no more drones can be dispatched into the arena and the pilot need only destroy any remaining drones to win. Pilots call this 'clearing a round' and they will often perform a victory roll before leaving the arena.

Before starting his next round, the pilot will have his round performance assessed by the referees. A good hit rate will be scored for the efficient use of ammunition and will result in the pilot having his craft upgraded by the referees. A poor defense rate (that's anything **under** 100%) will result in the pilot having his craft downgraded.

The referees then set up a new set of installations and generators for the next round and more drones will be loaded into the drone generators. Any number of installations and generators can be set up on each round and they can be positioned anywhere in an arena. The pilot must then re-enter the arena ready for the next round to begin.



Defender Of The Ground

Pilots who complete an entire arena will be awarded a trophy before being promoted to the next arena.

If a pilot clears all of the arenas, he will win the supreme accolade of 'Defender of the Ground'.

Okay, that's enough of the rules! Viewers at home should note that the Century 23 network has now programmed the correct score table information onto their TV's central control system and if you look at the telefax panel on the lower part of your TV set, you will see the relevant score information for the games being displayed there.

To take you through each display one-by-one, in the lower left you will see two score panels. The panel marked 'Installations' shows you how many ground installations the pilot has left to defend in the arena for this round. If this ever reaches zero, the pilot is in real trouble! The panel marked 'Generators' shows you how many drone generators are still in play in the arena for this round. Only after a pilot has destroyed all of these, will he have stopped any more drones from being fired into the arena.

Also displayed on your telefax panel, you will see a red and a yellow bar. The yellow bar indicates the pilot's shield energy protecting his craft from the deadly firepower being thrown at him by the drones. If this bar reaches zero, the pilot is a goner for sure! Finally, and I'm sure this needs no explaining, the red bar indicates how many of you, the viewers at home, are tuned in to the Century 23 network. Last year, a record 59.6 billion viewers scattered across the galaxy watched this program LIVE as 76 pilots died trying to gain the coveted title of 'Defender of the Ground'. Only three pilots claimed that title last year — how many will claim it this year?

Also, last year, as I'm sure you'll all remember, the contestants survived for eight rounds in three arenas. Well, this year we thought we'd make things interesting by making the contestants survive for **ten** rounds in a total of **five** wholly different arenas.

Our cameraman, Bob, has indicated to me that he is now positioned and ready in his fully shielded, all terrain vidiunit inside the arena! Bob's unit is also equipped to receive information from the pilot's on-board computer, and he'll be sending us back Heads Up Display data so that we can really get an idea of what's going on inside that arena. Well, over to Bob in the arena now, where I believe our first contestant is from Earth...

TELEFAX PANEL

Generators - Shows how many drone generators are still in play in the arena.

Ratings - Shows number of viewers watching.

Installations - Shows how many ground installations the pilot has left to defend in the arena.

Shield - Yellow bar indicates the pilot's shield energy protecting his craft.

Getting Started

When you first load the game, the title credits will appear and the title music will play. Press <Space> to continue. You will now be presented with the game options. If you do not touch a key for a short while, ThunderStrike will go into quadravisual testflight mode. Press any key to return to the game options.

Press the relevant key on the keyboard to select the option that you require. If you have a mouse connected, then you can also use the mouse button to select the option you require.

DOS <ESC> PC version only. This, of course, will quit the game and return you to the MS-DOS prompt.

Option <F1> When selected, further options will appear. These options are:

Menu - Returns to Main Menu or Time-Out Menu.

Mouse - If you are operating from mouse control, this option will enable you to change one of the following settings:

i) Alter the mouse left / right sensitivity.

ii) Alter the mouse up / down sensitivity.

iii) Switch between up / down and dive / climb control and will be more suitable to pilots used to aircraft controls.

iv) Switch between left or right handed mouse button control. A cross in this box represents left handed control.

Joystick - PC version only.

Keyboard - PC version only. If you are operating from the keyboard control, this option will enable you to redefine the left, right, up, down, thrust and fire keys. *(See page 14 under flight controls to see the default settings.)*

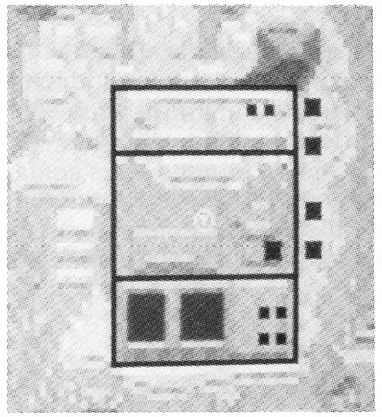
Option <F1> is also available from the Time-Out mode during the game.

Play <F2> This option will start the game. PC version only. If you're re-starting a new game and have made it past the ten rounds in the first arena (Deinon), a new menu screen will come up allowing you to start on the first level of the highest arena that you've attained.

Craft <F3> This option will let you select your strike craft. You start the game with the ThunderStrike 18 craft, but if you wish you can change this for one of the craft from the StrikeHornet or ThunderFly ranges. Using this option enables you to see the five craft in the MegaCorp hangers. Using the keyboard press <SPACE> to change the highlighted craft and press <RETURN> to select it. Alternately, if you are using a mouse, click on one of the craft in the background to highlight it and then click on it again when it is highlighted to select it.

In The Arena

You start each arena from the center. The games will start as soon as the camera view of your ship appears, and the referees will immediately start to launch drones from the generators. If you have just entered the arena, it is always wise to take a look at the terrain map (press <F4>) to determine your situation. Your position is shown on the map as an encircled 'T'. The positions of active installations appear as small, red, pulsing squares and active generators appear as larger, checkered blue / red squares. Note that the game is now paused. Press any key to return to camera view.



Arena Map

Ground Installations - It is your task to protect these installations. These are the red pyramids, pulsing to show that they are active. They will turn gray and flatten out if they are successfully attacked and destroyed by a Saboteur drone. When Saboteur drones attack installations, they turn red. It then takes about ten seconds for the drone to destroy the installation.

You can save an installation from being destroyed after it is attacked by a Saboteur drone by firing at and destroying the drone.

Drone Generators - These are the blue / red mounds, pulsing to show that they are active too! They will turn blue / gray and flatten out if you manage to destroy one. If you repeatedly press fire, a number of yellow shots will spray forward from your craft. These are low powered shots (indicated by yellow) and it takes about five direct hits with this weapon to destroy a generator. For information on high powered ammunition, please read the section on "Power Pods" *(See page 11)*. Do not fly over a generator or your ship's energy shield will rapidly deplete. Note that when your ship's shield is being damaged, your ship will flash red.

The Arenas - You must survive through ten rounds in each of five arenas. Once you finish an arena you will receive an award. Once you have achieved a level and lose the game, you will be allowed to start at the first level of the highest arena that you've been awarded. *The five different arenas are:*

Deinon - Rounds 0 to 9.
Xerxes - Rounds 10 to 19.
Polloi - Rounds 20 to 29.
Canton - Rounds 30 to 39.
Synaps - Rounds 40 to 49.

A game is over when you either destroy your craft or your contract is terminated.

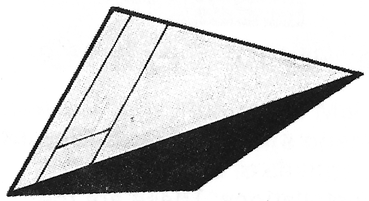
If you clear all fifty rounds, you will be awarded the supreme accolade **'Defender of the Ground'**.

Drones

There are five different drone types that can be launched from the drone generators. As you progress from round to round, the action will really heat up as referees fire more and more drones at an even faster rate. The drones also become tougher from arena to arena and will take even more shots to destroy in the later arenas.

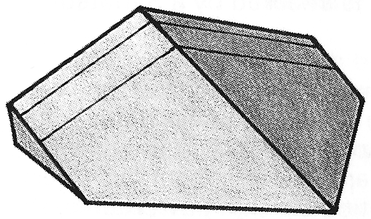
If a drone collides with your craft, your energy shield will take massive damage.

The five drones in this year's arenas are:



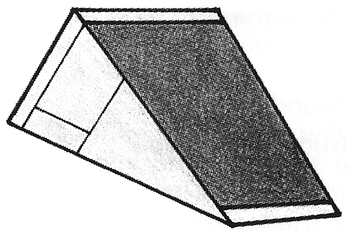
Fighters

These drones appear as fighters flying in the air at high speed with cyan nose-cones and red afterburners. The Fighter drone will try to attack your craft by firing shots at it. Once launched, the Fighter drone will head straight for your craft. As soon as it is within range of you, it will fire at you. If you manage to tail a Fighter, it will take evasive action to try to shake you off. As you progress from round to round, the referees will increase the firepower of Fighters.



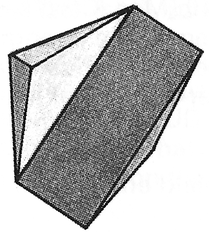
Gliders

These drones appear as dark blue, wide-winged gliders flying in the air at slow speed and turning in large arcs. The Glider drone will try to attack your craft by firing shots at it. Once launched, the Glider drone will roam around in wide arcs. If the Glider sees your craft in its sights, then it will fire at you though it is only capable of small amounts of firepower. If the Glider drone senses that all of the generators have been destroyed, then it will slowly home in on your craft in an attempt to impact with it.



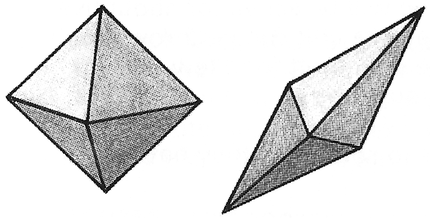
Bombers

These drones appear as yellow / blue craft flying in the air at slow speed. The Bomber drone will try to attack your craft by leaving trails of 'floating mines' for your craft to collide with. Once launched, the Bomber drone will head straight for your craft. As soon as it is within range of you it will start to drop large numbers of 'air mines' close to you and then slowly take evasive action leaving a trail of mines. Tailing a Bomber is extremely difficult.



Lungers

These drones appear as cyan / blue rocks that float along slowly through the air and require a number of shots to destroy. They are incapable of firepower, but when they are destroyed, they will emit shrapnel in all directions in an attempt to damage your craft. When the Lunger drone is launched, it will determine a random direction and float in that direction. If the Lunger drone senses that all of the generators have been destroyed, then it will directly home in on your craft in an attempt to impact with it.



Saboteurs

These drones appear as blue / cyan spinners that move slowly along the ground and are incapable of firepower. The Saboteur drones will try to attack your ground installations. They are the only drones capable of this and as such they represent a great threat. As soon as a Saboteur drone is launched, it will target on one of your installations and head for it. If the drone manages to reach the installation, it will mount it and try to destroy it. If you destroy a Saboteur while it is mounted on an installation, the installation will be saved. If the Saboteur succeeds in destroying the installation, it will either turn into a mutated Saboteur or re-target on another installation. Mutated Saboteurs are highly dangerous and should be avoided at all costs. They appear as red spinners and will home in on your craft, trying to collide with it.

Military Hardware Pods

Sometimes when you destroy a drone, a purple / blue pod will appear — bouncing up and down in the air. Pods contain the very latest in military hardware and may be collected by the pilot to aid him. The pod will remain in the arena until it stops bouncing, so the higher above the ground it appears, the longer it will be available. The HUD will let you know what type of pod it is via the PTI. You can pick it up by simply flying into it at which point it will be instantly installed in your craft. The pods available in the games this year are:

Defense Pod - The very latest in craft defense — another breakthrough invention from Professor Cardoman's Laboratories. When installed, a blue energy capsule will spin around your craft, protecting it until it collides with and destroys an enemy drone. Up to three pods can be collected for your defense.

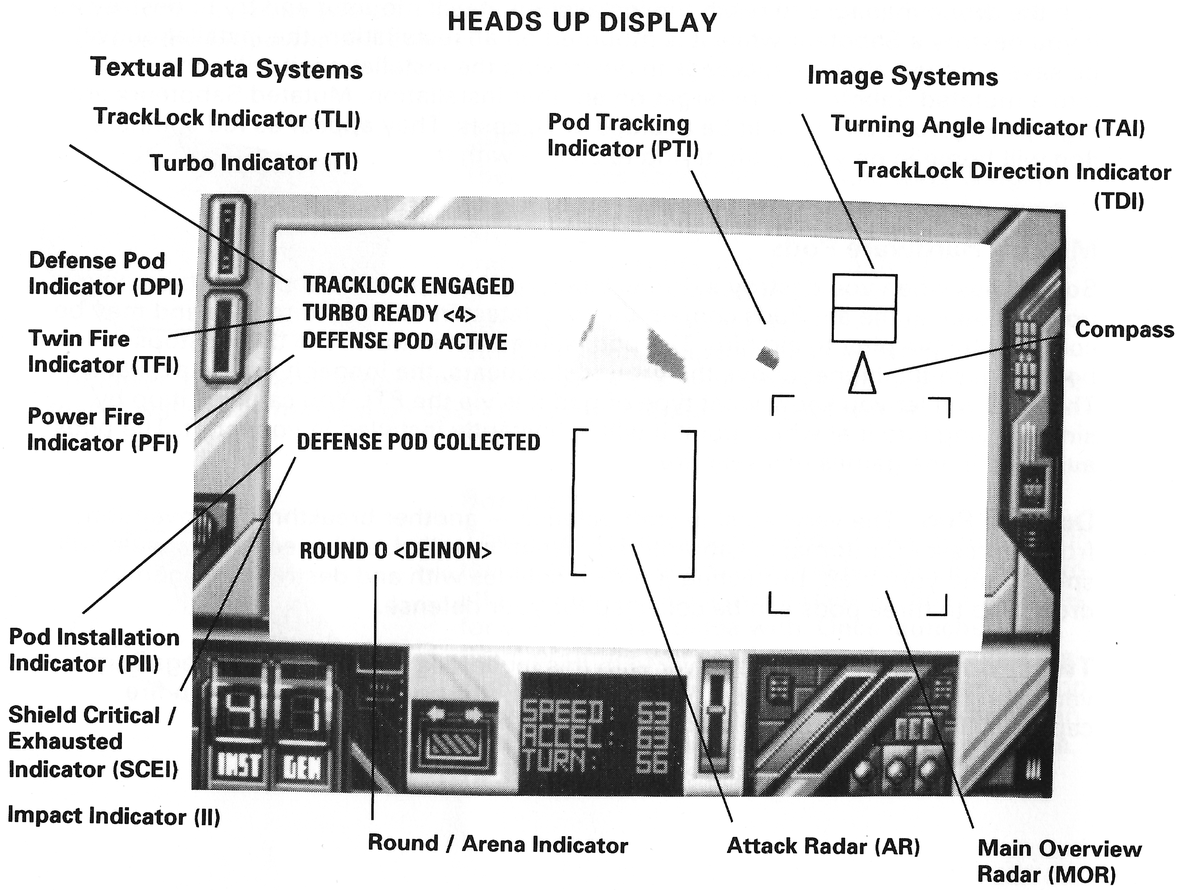
Twin Pod - Double your firepower with this ingenious invention from MegaCorp's very own research laboratories. When installed, this pod will give you twin fire capability for a set amount of shots.

Power Pod - Really turn up the heat on your firepower with MegaCorp's Power Fire Pod. When installed, your shots will turn red and will equal the strength of five standard yellow shots. This is very useful for destroying generators faster and for later arenas when some enemy drones will require a higher number of shots to destroy.

Shield Pod - Top up your shield. When collected, your shield energy will be replenished by one-fifth of full capacity.

Turbo Pod - MegaCorp's creation will give you that extra burst of speed. When collected, the TI will be activated on the HUD. Each pod contains four turbos and you can never have more than four turbos installed at one time. To activate the turbo, quickly double-click / press the thrust button — the turbo will be active for about five seconds. Beware when turboing because the trailing camera unit can be thrown high up into the air behind you and you won't be able to see your craft for a few vital seconds. In this instance use the AR or MOR to guide you 'blind'.

Various HUD messages will appear as you collect pods to show that they have been installed in your craft.



The Heads Up Display (HUD)

The HUD is an intelligent, sophisticated piece of equipment that is essential to the pilot. It will actually anticipate the data that the pilot requires and throw it up on the screen. This saves the HUD from being constantly cluttered with unneeded data. The system is split into two halves, image data being displayed on the right and textual data being displayed on the left.

Image Systems

Turning Angle Indicator (TAI) - This appears as a straight line within a square box. The angle of the line indicates the turning angle of the craft to the left or right.

TrackLock Direction Indicator (TDI) - This only appears when in a TrackLock and it replaces the TAI system. The TDI appears as a box with two triangles on either side of it pointing left and right. If the box is highlighted, the craft will pass straight on at a TrackLock intersection. Otherwise, the craft will turn left or right according to which triangle is highlighted, so long as the craft is able to turn in that direction.

Compass - This appears as a triangle that rotates. The triangle shows the direction in which your craft is facing. The compass is extremely useful if used in conjunction with your position on the MOR.

Main Overview Radar (MOR) - This is probably the most vital part of the HUD. The MOR shows the position of all drones and installations on the map and should be used in conjunction with the relief map. Saboteur drones are shown as cyan / blue 'blips'. All other drones are shown as yellow 'blips'. Your position is shown as a white 'blip'. Finally, active installations are also shown on this radar as red 'blips'. A warning sound followed by a red 'blip' flashing indicates that a Saboteur drone is attempting to deactivate that installation.

Attack Radar (AR) - This radar will only switch on when at least one drone comes within close vicinity of your craft. Unlike the MOR, this radar will rotate around you, with your craft always being positioned at the center of the radar. Saboteur drones are shown as cyan 'blips'. All other drones are shown as yellow 'blips'. Drone fire is shown as purple 'blips'. Note that installations are not shown on this radar.

Textual Data Systems

Pod Tracking Indicators (PTI) - Any pick-up pod that appears on screen will have a PTI attached to it indicating what pod type it is.

TrackLock Indicator (TLI) - The message 'TrackLock' will appear if the player enters a track and the TDI will switch on.

Turbo Indicator (TI) - If the craft has a Turbo Pod installed, this indicator will display the number of turbos left whenever the pilot presses the thrust button. It also indicates when turbo is 'Engaged'.

Defense Pod Indicator (DPI) - If the craft has at least one Defense Pod installed, the message 'Defense Pod Active' will be displayed.

Twin Fire Indicator (TFI) - If the craft has a Twin Fire Pod installed, the message 'Twin Fire Exhausted' will appear when the pod runs out.

Power Fire Indicator (PFI) - If the craft has a Power Fire Pod installed, the message 'Power Fire Exhausted' will appear when the pod runs out.

Pod Installation Indicator (PII) - Whenever the craft picks up a pod, an indication sound will be heard and a message will appear indicating the pod type collected.

Shield Critical / Exhausted Indicator (SCEI) - When the shield energy of your craft runs dangerously low, a warning sound will be emitted and a 'Shield Critical' message will flash. If your shield runs out, the message 'Shield Exhausted' will appear. If your craft sustains another hit it will explode!

Impact Indicator (II) - If your craft collides with a drone, you will take massive damage and a message will appear indicating which type of drone you collided with.

Round Cleared Indicator (RCI) - When a round is cleared, this indicator appears in large red letters across the HUD showing which round has been cleared while your craft does a victory roll.

Shutdown Imminent Indicator (SII) - If all of the installations are deactivated, then the 'Shutdown Imminent' message will appear in large red letters across the HUD giving the pilot ten seconds to clear the round — otherwise the pilot's contract will be terminated!

TrackLocking

Black tracks run around each arena and a skillful pilot should be able to use these to his advantage. To enter a track you should line yourself up with the track and pull your craft down into it. You will now be 'TrackLocked' and the track will drag you along at high speed. This is quite difficult for novice pilots to do the first time but you will soon pick it up.

Examination of the terrain map will show you the position of your craft on the tracks. You should use the TDI on your HUD to guide you around the tracks.

Note that TrackLocking should only be attempted by skilled pilots and should only become necessary from round nine onwards if you do not have any turbos fitted.

Flight Controls

The game can be played using a mouse, joystick or keyboard (keyboard and joystick option not available on Amiga/Atari ST).

Using A Mouse - Left, right, up and down will move you left, right, up and down. Use the left mouse button to thrust you forward and the right mouse button to fire. You must repeatedly press this button to maintain your fire.

During The Game (Keyboard Players — PC Version Only):

Z	Left.
X	Right.
L	Up.
<	Down.
P	Thrust.
Space	Fire.

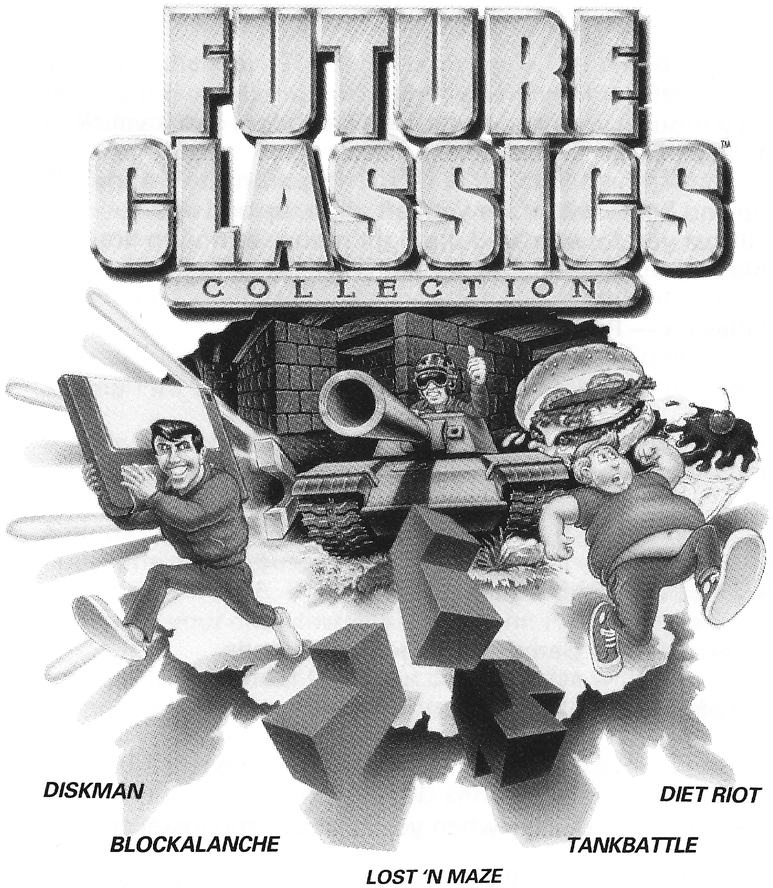
During The Game (Mouse, Joystick and Keyboard Players):

F4	Shows detailed terrain map. Game is paused in this mode.
F10	Pause / Unpause picture.
ESC	Enter Time-Out mode.

Turbos - Pushing the thrust button twice quickly when you have a turbo installed will initiate the turbo.

From Time-Out mode you can access options (control and video), abort the game or return back to the game.

If you have a technical question, write to us at the address below or call 714/698-1257. For Customer Service call 714/661-8337. LIVE Studios, Inc., 30151 Branding Iron Road, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675.



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